

## **Exegetical Notes – Galatians 1:11-24**

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### **Galatians 1:11-24**

#### **Verses 11-12**

***<sup>11</sup> I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. <sup>12</sup> I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.***

- The Gospel which Paul preached was not, and is not, the creation of men. It is not handed down from man to man.
- It is received by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.
- So, Paul was not the author of what he preached.

#### **Verses 13-17**

***<sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. <sup>14</sup> I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. <sup>15</sup> But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. <sup>17</sup> I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.***

- See Acts 9:1-9.
- As proof that he did not invent the gospel he preached to the Galatians, he tells them about his life before his conversion to Christianity. Before his conversion, he was a devout Jew who aggressively persecuted the Church.
- But, without his knowing it, he had been called by God to preach to non-Jewish people. This calling was from before he was born, but was revealed to him in God's time.
- When he understood that God was calling him to preach the gospel, he did not go to others to learn the gospel he was to preach, but went into the

desert alone to pray. After that time, he returned to the city of Damascus, the place where God had made his calling clear to him.

### **Verses 18-20**

***<sup>18</sup> Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother. <sup>20</sup> I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.***

- After 3 years of preaching the gospel (the text does not say that Paul was in the desert for 3 years), Paul did go to Jerusalem and visited Peter (Cephas is the Hebrew form of the Greek name Peter), and James, the brother of Jesus. This visit was probably because the Apostle heard about his ministry and wanted to be sure that his preaching was correct (see Acts 9:26-30 and Acts 11:30).
- Paul is adamant that he was there only 15 days and that he met only Peter and James. His adamancy implies that other stories were being spread about this meeting. Perhaps, people were saying that Paul was corrected by Peter and James because the gospel he was preaching was wrong.

### **Verses 21-24**

***<sup>21</sup> Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. <sup>23</sup> They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” <sup>24</sup> And they praised God because of me.***

- After the meeting with Peter and James, Paul went back to work preaching in Syria and Cilicia. No correction to his message was issued from the Apostles. It was reported to the Churches in the regions of Syria and Cilicia that Paul’s conversion was genuine and the people there praised God because Paul had come to Jesus.
- Paul wants to reassure the Galatians that the gospel he preached to them was entirely reliable and that any stories they may have heard about it to the contrary are lies.

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